SOME SEPTEMBER MAGAZINES

REMINISCENCES OF GEORGE FULLER.

From The Atlantic Monthly.

Toward the close of one afternoon, when George Fuller was tired, having been at work on two portraits all day, I dropped in, and we had a long, rambling talk about Millet, Corot, Henner, the old masters, and art in general. Fuller was in a genial, talkative, twilight mood, and I am sorry that I can remember only a part of what he said. He was a good talker, because he was so much in earnest. "Portrait painting," said he, "is a downright grind, and if it were not so interesting it would be quite too hard work. My eyes get tired looking, and my legs walking to and fro. If I can satisfy the sitter's family I am happy. I was very shaky about the hands in Mr. ——'s portrait, and worked like fury over them. If he knew I was painting on the hands, those hands would grow perfectly rigid; so I tried to fool him, sometimes by saying, now I am going to work on the hair, or the coat; and then he would forget about his hands, so I got a chance to observe them when they were natural. His wife pleased me by saying, when she saw the portrait, 'Those are his hands, sure enough, and nobody's else.' In that portrait of Miss —— the dress bothered me more than a little. I repainted it I don't know how many times. It was always too prominent. I wanted to get away from it; I wanted to get something between it and me. At last, when the sitter was not here, I simplified it, and got it to suit me better."

I quote these remarks to show how carefully and devotedly he worked over every part of a portrait, till he was satisfied that it was as good as he could make it. In fact, more than a few persons were surprised by the portraits in the Fuller Memorial Exhibition; they had much "quality," and the best were remarkable for a warm and rich harmony of color.

Had Fuller had been educated thoroughly in his art, I believe he would have left a name far greater than any of modern times. He hated his materials, because they impeded his utterance. Suppose him to have had them under almost perfect control, like Velasquez, and there is no saying what he, with his exquisite ideals, might not have accomplished. Of course this is supposing a great deal. As it is, he accomplished surprising things through force of will and loving labor, though a most faulty workman. He never had what is called facility in the slightest degree. Men who have it, he once remarked, seldom have anything important to say. I believe he was thinking of modern men when he said this, for he knew too much not to admire the mechanical superiority of many old Dutch and Flemish works, for instance, the motives of which could make no appeal to his sympathies. He regarded tricks of technique with indifference, if not with contempt. One of his favorite practices was to scrape his pictures with the brush-handle. He wished by this means to permit the cool grays of the under-painting to show through and temper the warm flesh-tones; but he finally carried the practice to excess, applying it apparently without discrimination to flesh, draperies, background, etc. It became a mannerism, but he defended it by saying that it made no difference which end of the brush you painted with; a remark intended to cover the whole ground of the practice of the art, but which was liable to be misinterpreted.

He never studied abroad, but spent about eight months in the year 1859 travelling in Europe and seeing the works of the old masters. He did not believe that American young men should seek instruction in Paris. He advised them to stay in this country. He considered that the time was almost ripe for the foundation of a National "school" of art, and that it was delayed by the denationalization of so many of our young men. "They never outgrow the foreign habit of thought in which they are unconsciously being trained all the while they are in France," he said. In his view, the manual training they received at the same time was not so perfect in its way as to atone for this calamity. Undoubtedly the artistic gods before which he himself first worshiped were the early Americans—Allston, Stuart and Copley. When he roomed with Thomas Ball, the sculptor, in Boston in the early days, all the young artists looked upon Allston as the bright particular star in the American firmament. Afterward, through all the palmy days of the Dusseldorf school and of the French school, Fuller brooded in the silence of his home over those gracious fancies of his which were later to find adequate expression on canvas, to bring him a measure of fame he hardly expected, but which was surely no more than his due.

ON THE WAY TO OUDEWATER.

George H. Boughton in Harper's.

The road ran most of the way on the top of a high dike, and beside the road and dike ran a placid little stream, that was now a river, now a canal, now a mill-pond; or it would lose itself in great pools and marshes among sandy flats, and then pull itself into a stream-like shape again, and go on as before, first one side of the dike and then the other, in the most wayward and un-Dutch-like manner. There were constant changes of the character of the scenery about it, funny little ferries now and then, and quaint little boats and bridges. There was plenty of characteristic figures, too, lolling over the bridges, smoking and chatting to other picturesque but podgy figures in the boats; curly blue smoke, too, everywhere, peat reek from the red chimneys of the fat and placid farmsteads nestled away among the apple and cherry trees, wreaths and puffs of pungent fat cigars from the idling figures.

It seemed a plodding, happy land on every side, where it was nearly always Sunday or fête-day afternoon. Rich, succulent fields of pasturage, where the drowsiest and sleekest cows and the fleeciest of pink-eyed sheep fairly waded about in the cloying grasses. The grain ricks seemed bursting with fullness, the orchards were laden down with apples, rosy, golden, and russet, and the air was filled with their fragrance. Great rich mellow pears were bearing down the looped branches of the long avenues of espaliers. Every inch of the "well-larded earth" seemed to be under the most loving and elaborate cultivation. Small wonder that the farm-houses looked pictures of home contentment; that the porches and arbors were overrun with vine and flower; that the garden paths were lined out with great splashes of color in masses of dahlia and hollyhock and aster; that the great brass door-knockers and the gilded weather-cocks filled the sunshine with tinges of glinting gold! The apples had their rosy hues repeated in ripe pippin-like cheeks of the tow-headed children rolling about in the orchards, and the glints of gold were reflected back from the massive ornaments of the Sunday-clad people at every turn, so that there was no lack of opulent Rubens-like color to gladden the soul of the lover of a full, rich picture. Although the men as a rule were arrayed in shiny black "store clothes," they compensated nobly to the general color scheme by wearing such startling scarfs of "Magenta" and "Solferino" hues, singly and in combination, that their massive rings and pins paled into half-tones beside them. The womenkind did not, either, put on much "blare" of color in their dress material. The correct form seemed amplitude. Skirt on skirt, "until it took the shape, fold after fold, of mountain" and of minor hay-stack. I have seen other womenfolk of Holland who made rather a parade of their wealth of piled-on petticoats, but I fancy the best of them would have felt rather slim, and poor beside these rotund maids and matrons. What airing of fine Brussels lace, too, on gold-bedizened cap, on gold-spangled sleeve, and jewel-clasped collar and frill! "And some had got rings upon every finger, and on some fingers they had got three," like Lord Bateman's bride. There was color enough, too, of the positive and eye-searing sort in cap strings and pinner. And how they seemed to enjoy their own and each others' magnificence of attire and ample spread of sail and beam! wandering about hand in hand, champing the rosy apple, or absorbing the melting pear. It seemed a vale of health, too, as well as wealth; nowhere had I seen such brilliant fresh complexions, such cheeks of peach (and peony) and cream, such bright-gleaming, kindly eyes. They had not the bale, bronzed look of the seaside Dutch, but they were seemingly just as strong and hearty.

THE QUEER CLUB FOUNDED BY BALZAC.

James Lane Clark in The Manhattan.

The first meeting of the acolytes was appointed by Balzac at a restaurant upon the Quay Entrepot, at the end of the Tournelle Bridge. The sign of this was a quadruped; and Balzac, who might often be seen walking slowly along the streets with his nose in the air, searching on the signs for names wherewith to baptize his characters, thus conceived the idea of naming his association the Cheval Rouge. The members were referred to as "horses"; the place of meeting—which was never to be the same, to avoid suspicion—was called a "stable." The "horses" were notified when and where to come to the "stable" by a billet delivered by a trusty person—the mysterious card of invitation being stamped with the figure of a red horse. The aims of the Cheval Rouge were set forth at the first meeting by Balzac in a speech of intoxicating, resistless eloquence—the "horses" were to lend each other aid on all occasions, and to labor with all their might for the fortune or the success of the particular "horse" requiring succor. Of this succor there was to be adequate future return. If one of the "horses" had just put forth a book or enacted a drama, all the other "horses" were to signalize, extol and glorify him in articles, notices and conversations. On the contrary, if any "horse" showed hostility to any other, he was to be kicked by the whole stable. The results of such an organization were obvious. They would take possession of the journals, invade the theatres, provide themselves with decorations, seat themselves in the chairs of the Academy, become the peers of any in France. All this was perfectly clear to the mind of Balzac; he was already in actual, demonstrable possession of it, just as he was of the four magnificent Arabian horses that were never bought; just as he was of the 400,000 francs accruing from the fruit of the ananas trees that were never planted; just as he was of the masses of gold, diamonds and carbuncles buried by Toussaint L'Ouverture that were never found; just as he was of the thirty productions, catalogued by him among his works, that were never written. Alas! that the history of the "Cheval Rouge" should be told so easily on a page—that order of literary knighthood in which the souls of all the members existed as one—where self-sacrifice was to be exactly equaled by self-aggrandizement, and the most exalted philanthropy was made to harmonize with ideal selfishness. After a few meetings "most of the 'horses' lacked money to pay for their oats in the symbolic manger," writes Théophile Gautier, who was one of them. "Each now replunged into the melée of life, fighting his way with his own arms; and this it is that explains why Balzac was not a member of the Academy, and died a simple Chevalier of the Legion of Honor."

A SUMMER TRIP TO ALASKA.

James A. Harrison in Lippincott's.

We were greatly favored when we left Sitka. Starting off in a rain, in which everything lay in muddy eclipse, we woke up next morning and found ourselves tracing the outside route to the Muir Glacier in sparkling sunshine. The transition was delightful, and, though most of the passengers were sick from the tossing of the ship on the long, outside ocean-swell, I believe they all enjoyed the sunshine as it flashed into their cabin windows, played on the walls, and pricked and scattered the enormous vapor-masses that hung over the mountains on our right. There were no longer the vaulted vapors of the preceding days, the dense counterpane of nebulous gray that covered the whole sky with its monotony. The heavy cloud-banks clung to the mountains, leaving an exquisite arc of sky, almost Italian in its sunny azure.

Nothing could be more superb than the deep, dark, velvety tints of the crinkled and crumpled mountains as they shelved to the sea and came in contact there with an edging of foam from the blue Pacific. Huge jelly-fish flapped about in the clear water, nebular patches of protoplasmic existence, capable apparently of no other functions than sensation, motion, and self-propagation. Some of them were richly streaked, long-tailed, delicately margined, with comet-like streamers, jelly-frills, and nuclei like a wide-open sunflower. Their motion was so indolently graceful that I could not help gazing at them.

Mount St. Elias! Yes, there it was, they affirmed, on the northeastern horizon, a vapory, unsubstantial cone, dancing up and down in the refracting light. I looked and looked, persuading myself that I saw the glorious vision 19,500 feet high. Others persuaded themself of the same fact, being naturally ambitious of carrying away remembrances of the tallest mountain in all America. But, after all, I fancy that nobody had a very strong faith in his discovery, particularly as the reputed mountain seemed to change its place, flit hither and thither on the curve of the sky, and finally disappear.

But yonder! What is that? Clouds? Apparently. But look again. What, that small speck just on the edge of the water? No, higher up—up—up. What a sight! Certainly the grandest view we have had yet. A huge, white, snow-tipped back, like a camel's hump, now loomed apparently right out of the water's edge,—the mighty range of Mount Fairweather, Mount Crillon, and eight or ten other domes and peaks, the highest fifteen thousand five hundred feet high, according to the measurement of the United States Coast Survey. This is the finest mountain landscape we have ever seen, not even excepting the Alps from Neufchâtel. The peaks looked enormously high as they shot up behind the sea-edge, far above the first stratum of cloud which ran along midway of the mountain in deep, slate-colored belts. Now and then the vapor thinned to the fineness of tulle and Brussa gauze, behind which the mountain colors loomed in vague and yet radiant purity. Gradually the ardent sun melted away the misty striated belts of cloud, and the great peaks stood out calmly and gloriously effulgent in the crystal August air, a scene of exquisite loveliness and sublimity. At one end a mighty glacier ran down to the sea, and at the other the pygmy mountains (two or three thousand feet high) we had been coasting lay like ebon carvings against the white, a ripple of dark velvet against ermine.

For hours we steamed toward this splendid picture, which, while growing more and more distinct, did not appear to be any nearer than when we first saw it. In the afternoon we turned to the right of this range into icy straits, and soon we were in the midst of a scene more wonderful, perhaps, than that through which we had just passed. On the light-green water lay literally hundreds of icebergs of all shapes and sizes, some a deep, translucent blue, the blue of cobalt, others green, others a pure white, serrated, castellated, crenellated, glittering,—from the size of a tureen to that of a small church. We seemed on the point of entering that ancient palæocrystic sea of which the geologists speak,—ice everywhere, our ship cutting its way through impinging ice. At length we cast anchor in eighty-three fathoms of water close to the gigantic Muir Glacier, which feeds these icy straits with their wonderful masses of crystal. This was the acme, the culminating point of our tour. Before us lay the stupendous mass of serrated ice, from three hundred to five hundred feet high, and several miles wide, from shore to shore, blue, wondrous, inaccessible, more ancient perhaps than the mountains against which it rested, running straight into the sea where we were at anchor, every moment enormous fragments breaking off and rolling down into the water with a reverberation like a clap of thunder. For hours we lay there as if spell-bound by this magnificent remnant of glacial action, more striking, to our thinking, than all the other glaciers we had passed and examined through our lenses, even than the Davidson Glacier or the wonderful incrustation along the Stickeen.

GROG.

Rear Admiral George H. Preble in the United Service.

"... All of them swigged it
And swore there was nothing like grog.
For grog is our larboard and starboard,
Our mainmast, our mizzen, our log;
At sea, or on shore, or when harbored,
The mariner's compass is grog."
—[An Old Sailor Song.

"O, that men should put an enemy into their mouths to steal away their brains! ... Every inordinate cup is unblessed, and the ingredient is a devil."—Othello.

"Bold Jack with smiles each danger meets,
Weighs anchor, heaves the log,
Trims all the sails, belays the sheets,
And drinks his can of grog."
—[Dibdin.

Grog, which properly is a mixture of rum and water, was never served out in the United States Navy, as it was the custom to give the men their whiskey, or, as it was erroneously called, "tot of grog,"—unadulterated—that is, in the language of the dram-drinker, "neat" or "straight." I hope I make my meaning plain to the average reader with all these colloquial terms.

Grog is defined as above in Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, but has not been deemed worthy of explanation in the leading encyclopædias (Chambers's excepted), and, strange to say, has no place in Falconer's Marine Dictionary, published in 1759.

It has been usual to ascribe the invention of grog to Admiral Vernon, and he certainly did introduce it into the royal navy in 1740, or thereabouts, though its invention, or the invention of mixed drinks, as will be shown, has claim to a much higher antiquity, and has been attributed to the jolly god Bacchus himself. Admiral Vernon, while in command of the West India station, and when extremely popular, on account of his reduction of Porto Bello, November 22, 1739, with only six vessels of war, caused to be served out to the men a new beverage of rum and water, or "half-and-half," which proved most palatable to them, and grew into favor; and as he was styled "Old Grog," from his wearing a rough "grogram" coat or cloak, in which he walked the deck in bad weather, the men gave it the name of "Grog."

Old sailors often talk of "thumb-grog," or "thumb-brewed grog," which they explain thus: Of a cold, wet night, at the striking the bell, when the watch came down wet and everything was very dark, some of them used to mix or brew their grog by dipping their thumb into the glass, and ascertain by feeling (as they could not see well) when they had put enough rum into it before adding water. The joke used to be, that the night was so cold they had no sensation in the tips of their thumbs, and, consequently, the rum came up to the middle and half filled the glass before they felt it, and thus "thumb brewed" was unusually strong. The old salt's receipt for a "nor'wester" is, "Fill half the glass with rum, and the other half with strong rum and water."

Evidently these old salts would say with Falstaff,—

"If I had a thousand sons, the first principle I would teach them should be, to forswear thin potations."

But "grog" or a somewhat similar mixture was used in the royal navy long before the days of Admiral Vernon. In the British Museum there is a MS. of "The Rate of Dyett for Souldgers and Maryners, for 56 Dayes for the Scotch borders; temp Hen. viii.," in which the diet for "Fleshe days," in which two meales per day were allowed, and "Fishe days, and fasting dayes with one meale the daye," etc., was allowed, and each man was allowed a "pottell of beverage, made with two partes water and one of sack."

In the third volume of State papers there is a letter from the Lord Deputy and Council of Ireland to Henry VIII., dated "Dubline, the 19th November, 1545," on the "presting and victualling of shipping," and among the drinks mentioned and allowed, besides "Beare," are "Wyne, Sake, 6 tonnes, maketh beverage 18 tonnes," "Wyne, Gascoyne, 11 tonnes, maketh beverage 16 tonnes." "So it seems the "Wyne" sack was reduced into what we would call "two-water grog;" that is, the beverage consisted of one-third sack and two-thirds water; and that the wine of Gascoyne not being as strong suffered less dilution.